



SAN FRANCISCO BAY
BIRD OBSERVATORY

Bird Monitoring Program at the Environmental Education Center



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INTRODUCTION

The San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (SFBBO) joined the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge's Environmental Education Center (EEC) to develop a bird monitoring program for the EEC and to set up a system to enter the historic bird data that has been collected at the EEC since 1988.

SFBBO developed this bird monitoring program which is now ready to be implemented by the EEC. The program is intended to establish a consistent method for collecting data that are representative of the bird communities at the EEC. It is set up to document the status and track any changes of bird populations within the restored habitat, during restoration and afterward. This citizen science program requires no or very limited facilitation by the EEC. The EEC staff or volunteers can further develop the protocol as they see fit. The bird monitoring program is a simple point-count survey and is to be performed primarily by EEC visitors and volunteers at their own leisure and all are welcome to participate. Data will be collected and entered by visitors to the EEC.

The EEC has records of historic bird data collected on site since 1988. These data are collected on large wall charts by EEC visitors and no standardized protocol has ever been used to collect them. SFBBO has developed an eBird account and entered two years of data. The eBird database is now ready for EEC volunteers to finish entering the data. These data have many limitations which should be considered before using them in analyses or reports.

In this final report, we have included the welcome sign, map and data sheets for the bird monitoring protocol. We have also included instructions on how to enter the historic data into eBird, eBird's concerns with the data and the eBird account information necessary for EEC volunteers to continue entering the data. The EEC now has all the needed information to implement this bird monitoring program and finish entering the historic data.

This project was funded by the Santa Clara County Water District. We thank David Thomson, Aidona Kakouros and the EEC volunteers for their support and guidance.

BIRD MONITORING PROTOCOL

Observers

This is a citizen science program and does not require management or participation from the EEC staff. All visitors or volunteers of the EEC can collect and submit these data at their own interest and leisure.

Observation Points

There are five pre-determined observation points at 100 meter intervals that should be GPSed and marked along the Marsh View Trail, a walking trail open to visitors that meanders through the habitat restoration area. EEC volunteers or staff can mark the observations points with a laminated sign (attached) fixed to a wood or metal stake to ensure that all observations are conducted at consistent locations.

Birding participants should be encouraged to remain on the marked trail only, and should not enter the restored area on foot.

Observations

EEC staff or volunteers can print copies of the observation form (attached) and keep them wherever the birding program welcome message and trail map (attached) are posted.

One form should be filled out for each person or group surveying together. Multiple observers can be noted on one observation sheet. Observers are to stand at a designated observation point for 5 minutes and record every species of bird and number of that species that are seen or heard within a 50 meter radius. This radius should be roughly estimated and will not be marked anywhere in the field.

It would be beneficial if every observation point is visited during a survey but it is not necessary in order to participate.

Submitting Data

Once observations are completed, it is the responsibility of the visitor to submit their findings online through their own personal account on eBird.org. Visitors should make a note in their eBird submissions that their sightings were made in association with the volunteer birding program at the EEC. The use of eBird in this program is intended to alleviate the responsibility of data management by a staff member or volunteer as there are limited resources for this task at this time.

HISTORIC DATA

The bird sighting charts that were set up by EEC staff and kept in their main building are ready to be submitted to eBird.org by EEC staff or volunteers. A unique eBird account and Gmail account have been set up for this purpose alone. Observations from 2008 and 2009 have already been submitted by SFBBO volunteers. Due to the lack of detail in these observations, they are not eligible to be made public via eBird but will be available for private or scientific analysis within eBird's archives (per P. Dunten). Correspondence with eBird volunteer Pete Dunten, the Santa Clara county reviewer, is included below which documents eBird's concerns with these data.

Instructions on entering Historic Data into eBIRD

1. Sign in to eBird.org
 - a. Username: EECbird
 - b. Password: historicbird
2. **The email account associated with this eBird member ID is DENWR.EECbird@gmail.com , password to email account is historicbird. Select "Submit Observations" from home page. This will take you to a **3-step process**:
Step 1: Select the location for the observation by either choosing "Don Edwards NWR (SCL Co.)" from the pull down menu, or clicking "Find it on a Map" and manually locating the EEC in Alviso.

**If you choose to do this manually, be sure to find and select the already created Don Edwards NWR (SCL Co.) hotspot on the map. DO NOT create another hotspot or location, as this information will not be grouped with already entered data for the same project/area.

Step 2: Observation date: Choose the first date of the 7-day range marked on the EEC bird sheets, and use this as the Observation date for the eBird website.

Example: A Mallard seen sometime within the range January 20-26 2008 should be entered into eBird with an Observation date of January 20, 2008. NO other sightings of this bird should be entered with any other or multiple dates.

Observation type: Choose "Incidental" because we have limited effort information associated with these bird sightings.

Comments section: Copy and paste the following text into the comments space provided for every submission-

Historic sightings made by visitors - recorded presence of species within a 7 day range. Used first day of this specified range for eBird observation date. Little effort information indicated.

Step 3: Mark all species seen with an **X** . No numbers should be used as we have no information to suggest group size.

In the box asking "are you submitting a **complete checklist** of the birds you were able to identify?" answer NO.

SUBMIT!

3. Submission process is complete. You may continue to enter additional sightings by clicking "Submit another for...(appropriate condition)" on the right hand side of the screen.

Ebird Correspondence Regarding Historic Bird Data

We received this email from Pete Dunten, eBird reviewer:

As explained in

<http://ebird.org/content/ebird/about/what-data-are-appropriate>

the EEC-bird data really aren't appropriate for eBird.

- (1) There is no information on time spent in the field.
- (2) There is no information on what specific area was covered.
- (3) The observations aren't tied to a specific date or time of day.
- (4) The observations weren't made by a single observer.
- (5) The observer isn't known, and hence no supporting information can be obtained.

Thus, none of the visitor log entries will pass review.

That leaves you with entries available for your own analysis. Such invalid entries are also available for scientists to analyze, but they are not made public. Please let me know what you decide to do.

I do appreciate your effort, and if you have time to contribute to eBird, I'm sure there are other projects to take on!

Best wishes, Pete

Pete Dunten / Mountain View / Santa Clara county reviewer

WELCOME MESSAGE

What birds do you see?



Common Yellowthroat
by Ashutosh Sinha



Song Sparrow
SFBBO

Our natural habitats are constantly changing and the animals that use those habitats change with them. The habitat restoration project along the Marsh View Trail is a prime example.

Help us learn how our bird populations are evolving with the restoration project. Take a walk and submit your bird sightings!

It's as easy as ...

Step 1: Take one of these forms with you while walking the Marsh View Trail. When you come to a point #, look and listen for birds for 5 minutes in that area. Record what you discover on the observation sheet provided here.

Step 2: Submit your bird sightings online at eBird.org. Registration is easy and free!

OBSERVATION FORM

Birding at the EEC	
Directions:	1. Record <i>everything</i> that you see or hear at the observation point, within a 50 meter radius. 2. Only record birds when standing at designated points along the trail. 3. Observations should last for 5 minutes at each point. 4. You don't have to visit every point! However many you reach is still helpful to us!
Date: _____	Name of Observer(s): _____
Location: <u>Don Edwards NWR - EEC</u>	
Point #: _____	Time Arrived at Point: _____
Species and number (seen or heard)	Habitat type bird is in:
_____	_____
_____	_____
Point #: _____	Time Arrived at Point: _____
Species and number (seen or heard)	Habitat type bird is in:
_____	_____
_____	_____
Point #: _____	Time Arrived at Point: _____
Species and number (seen or heard)	Habitat type bird is in:
_____	_____
_____	_____

MAP OF OBSERVATION POINTS



OBSERVATION POINT GPS LOCATIONS

100m layout	Lat	Long
Point 1	37°26'20.07"N	121°57'33.88"W
Point 2	37°26'18.71"N	121°57'30.69"W
Point 3	37°26'16.17"N	121°57'29.10"W
Point 4	37°26'13.04"N	121°57'28.30"W
Point 5	37°26'10.29"N	121°57'28.82"W